

Sadly, Derrick Lutters lost his life in battle on May 1, 2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Derrick's death was a tragedy for his family and the entire community. Small towns are like that—they are like family and very close knit. Derrick's friends and former co-workers were devastated by the loss.

Marian Lutters expressed how proud the entire family was of her son, "He said he wanted to protect people and help establish a better way of life, especially for children." Her words aptly honor her son's ultimate sacrifice.

Mrs. Lutters is supported by the entire community, and it is my desire that she also feels the continued respect, admiration, and heartfelt sympathy from the Members of Congress and Americans across the country.

COMMEMORATING SEA OTTER AWARENESS WEEK

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 27, 2005

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to Sea Otter Awareness Week, sponsored by Defenders of Wildlife. The support given by Defenders, Friends of the Sea Otter, the Otter Project, and the Ocean Conservancy to recover the Southern Sea Otter has raised public awareness and helped protect this important species under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act.

The study of southern sea otter populations provides much-needed information on ways to improve the health of coastal ecosystems. We already know sea otters play a critical role in maintaining healthy kelp beds along the California coast, an important habitat and nursery ground for some of the depleted West Coast rockfish stocks. Sea otter research has proven to be an effective method of monitoring toxins and diseases in the marine environment, both of which can affect the health of humans and other wildlife. These charismatic animals also bring significant tourism spending to central Californian coastal communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting to hold Sea Otter Awareness Week this week as Congress moves to reauthorize arguably the bedrock of environmental laws, the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The dramatic turnaround realized by the once thought extinct southern sea otter is a result of two critical protection laws—the ESA and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the southern sea otter population grew from less than 100 otters in the 1930's to the present total of 2,800. Scientists maintain that it will take 3,100 otters to make a population stable enough to even consider removing them from the Endangered Species list. Unfortunately, threats from disease, exposure to environmental pollutants, and entrapment in fisheries gear are threatening the species' continued recovery. As reauthorization of the ESA moves forward this week in the House, I will fight to keep it strong enough to successfully overcome these threats to the Southern Sea Otter.

Many constituents in my District have an interest in, and are affected by, sea otter management. I introduced H.R. 2323, the Southern Sea Otter Recovery and Research Act, and work with my colleagues to secure fund-

ing in an effort to support the recovery of the population. The nonprofit environmental groups work with the Monterey Bay Aquarium, researchers, fishermen, and state and Federal agencies to recover the Southern Sea Otter, obtain increased research funds, and remove threats to this keystone species.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the many accomplishments of the non-profit environmental organizations and other agencies and people who devote a tremendous effort to protect and recover the Southern Sea Otter. This week I join the people of my and other districts honoring Sea Otters and those people working to save them and restore their populations.

RECOGNIZING NICOLE CALAMUNCI FOR HER OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 27, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the exemplary academic achievements of Nicole Calamunci, a resident of Chautauqua County, city of Jamestown, upon receiving the United States Academy Achievement Award.

Nicole was named a United States National Award winner in English. Fewer than 10 percent of all High School Students across America are given this prestigious honor. Nicole was nominated for this award by her Middle School English teacher.

Along with her academic achievements Nicole demonstrates a variety of other outstanding characteristics. She possesses leadership skills, an interest in multiple subjects, and a strong motivation to improve and learn new things. Nicole is also very enthusiastic, responsible, and has an excellent attitude.

Nicole is the daughter of John and Gioconda Calamunci of Jamestown, and attends Persell Middle School.

Ms. Calamunci is an exemplary and dedicated student, with much to offer. That is why Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor this young lady.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE 100TH BIRTHDAYS OF LEOPOLDO CASTRO CASTRO AND LUCIA CONTRERAS PEREZ

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 27, 2005

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 100th birthday celebration of Leopoldo Castro Castro and Lucia Contreras Perez, parents of Jesus V. Castro, a former resident of my Congressional District and an exchange student from Peru at Shaker Heights High School from 1965–1966.

Leopoldo Castro was born in Orcotuna, Peru, a small village in the Andes Mountains, on November 15, 1905. Although his parents were farmers without any formal education, Leopoldo managed to finish grade school, and with only that level of education, became a distinguished resident of Orcotuna. Leopoldo wanted to become a lawyer, but his family

could not afford his college education, nor were there any colleges in the region. But those hurdles did not hold him back. Leopoldo saved enough money to purchase a law book and taught himself the Peruvian legal code.

At age 20, he was appointed Justice of the Peace of the District of Orcotuna by the State Supreme Court, a position he held for over 50 years. His fair and thoughtful decisions as Justice of the Peace gained him the respect of his entire village.

Achieving what Leopoldo could not for lack of means, his son, Jesus V. Castro, and his grandson, Jorge E. Castro, attended college and law school and became attorneys. Jorge currently serves as Tax and Trade Counsel in my Washington, DC office.

Leopoldo's wife of over 70 years, Lucia Contreras Perez, also of Orcotuna, will turn 100 years of age March 2, 2006. They live happily in Lima, Peru with their children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, next week their hometown of Orcotuna will honor the lives of Lucia and Leopoldo during the annual Saint Francis of Assisi traditional festivities. I wish Lucia and Leopoldo Godspeed as they celebrate their 100th birthday.

A SMALL BUT IMPORTANT STORY FROM VERMONT

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 27, 2005

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I wish to tell you a story, and in so doing commend a wonderful grassroots project in northern Vermont. It is a small story and a simple one, but it says volumes about the generosity and support of the people of Vermont, and the care that the citizens of our nation as a whole extend to those who are bravely serving in our military forces.

Sharon Waterhouse, of Richford, Vermont decided to sew a Christmas stocking for her son, Josh, who is serving in Iraq with other members of the Vermont National Guard, and stuff it with small Christmas gifts. It immediately occurred to her that she could sew stockings for his whole unit, all 32 of his fellow Vermont National Guard members.

But Ms. Waterhouse didn't stop there. Since she loves to sew, she set a course to make 500 stockings, asking her aunt, Andrea Bowden, to help get donations to stuff them. Michelle Long of the Guard Family Readiness Group pitched in to arrange the shipping. The Richford Legion and CF's Diner chipped in by setting out donation jars to help buy supplies. And others have volunteered to help sew, including students from Enosburg High School, along with their teachers Jessica Leo and Kaye Mehaffey.

Sharon Waterhouse herself is sewing between 300 and 400 stockings, and with the help of other generous hands, she hopes to provide stockings for the entire Vermont Guard contingent—over 1400 soldiers—serving in Iraq.

There are moments when our brave men and women in uniform, facing daily dangers in Iraq which we can scarcely imagine, need to know that their nation understands the sacrifices they are willing to make on the Nation's